VANTARI
NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER '89

Quick ST 1.6 Press Release

Press release for immediate distribution to all Atari ST Users in the United States and Canada. Friday. October 27,1989

Quick ST 1.6 -- Shareware by Darek Mihocka and Ignac A. Kolenko

TOS 1.4 is now available.It is great for speeding up file operations on hard disks, but compared to earlier versions of TOS it does very little to speed up screen operations. Regardless of which TOS you have, the program Quick ST 1.6 is for you.

Quick ST 1.6 increases the speed at which the ST performs screen operations, such as printing text to the screen, scrolling the screen, drawing windows and dialog boxes, and reducing the overhead of other graphics operations, such as desktop redraws.

Printing of text strings to the screen is sped up by 1510% in medium resolution and 1240% in monochrome. Character by character printing is three times faster. Screen scrolling is at blitter chip speeds. This all means that your .TOS and .TTP programs will run faster. Line drawing is twice as fast, which makes zoom boxes and windows draw much faster.

Graphical text is printed much faster, which means that your desktop windows will update faster and your GEM programs will operate faster.

The result is that your Atari ST appears to run faster and smoother than before. You spend less time waiting for the screen to scroll or redraw.

Quick ST 1.6 does not physically make your ST any faster. It simply makes TOS more efficient at manipulating the screen display. In some cases, it will make your ST perform better than an equivalent ST equipped with hardware enhancements like a blitter chip, 16 MHz board, or even TOS 1.4. And all this is done in software, so installation is as simple as copying a file.

Quick ST 1.6 runs from the AUTO folder and so does not use the already overcrowded desk accessory menu, or require interaction with the user. It is completely transparent to most applications. It uses under 20K of RAM, and automatically installs either the color or monochrome version and throws away initialization code to save memory.

Quick ST 1.6 runs on any Atari ST or Mega ST using a standard SC1224 color or SM124 monochrome monitor. A blitter chip is optional, as is an accelerator board. All official releases of TOS are supported.

The following screen resolutions are supported:

- 320x200 low resolution
- 640x200 medium resolution
- 640x400 monochrome

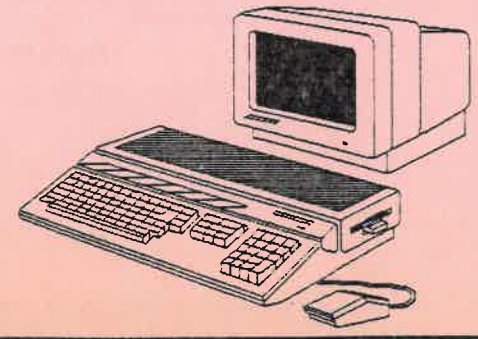
Here are some benchmark results using the Quick Index 1.6 program, running on a TOS 1.4 1040ST, in monochrome, with no blitter chip:

BIOS text	325 %
BIOS string	1240 %
BIOS scroll	134 %
GEM draw	193 %

These numbers are greater than those obtained for an ST not using Quick ST 1.6, but equipped with TOS 1.4, blitter chip and 16MHz board. When used with Quick ST 1.6, such a system is amazingly fast.

In another benchmark, the entire Quick ST source code (9000 lines of 68000 assembly language) was loaded into ST Writer 3.4 and scrolled from top to bottom. Without Quick ST, this takes 90 seconds. With Quick ST, this takes 49 seconds, almost 100% faster. And ST Writer can keep up with your typing now when used with Quick ST.

This document was produced entirely on an Atari ST using Calamus Desktop



The Vantari Newsletter

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The Vantari Newsletter is a publication of Vantari, The Atari Users' Group of Vancouver, P.O. Box 3614 Main Post Office, Vancouver B.C. V6B 3Y6.

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MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues are $20.00 for individual members, $25.00 for Family memberships and $15.00 for a newsletter only subscription by mail each month. Memberships are renewable in the same month that you joined.

VANTARI MEETINGS

Vantari meets on the second wednesday of each month at the Hastings Community Centre, 3096 E. Hastings St. from 7:00pm until 10:00pm. Visitors are welcome to attend one meeting to decide on membership. Come in and meet us!

ADVERTISING RATES AND POLICIES

Advertising must conform to our family publication standards. Ads must be camera-ready copy in full page, half page, half column, or business card size. If you mail your ads to the editor with a cheque to cover the listed rates, your ad will appear in the next issue. Deadlines for ads are the first day of each month.

ADVERTISING RATES:

FULL PAGE	-	$20.00
HALF PAGE	-	$12.00
HALF COLUMN	-	$7.00
BUSINESS CARD	-	$4.00

* Subject to change without notice

Members receive free classified ads for computer related items in the following catagories: Swap, Wanted, or For Sale (as space permits.) Claims made within ads are the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

From the Editor...

Another month and another issue. Regretfully we have to report on the death of John J. Anderson in the San Fransico earthquake. John wrote many an article in support of Atari computers. My favorite was his long running Outpost Atari, for Creative Computing magazine. Read the article for more details.

We are pleased this month to have more than average articles input from our own members. Congratulations folks, keep up the good work!

As well we report news from other sources as noted.

I am leaving the balance of this column for the ST Sig report.

till next month...

Don Hatch

ST Productivity Sig Meeting Report

(for home and small business users)

October report,

Calamus was demonstrated by Don Hatch but as the afternoon went on it was clear that we would have to dedicate more time to this program. We will continue it at another time. Generally the program is a large and very powerful desktop publishing program that rivals those available on the IBM or the Mac. It even has some features those programs don't. One that I heard about is the text rotation, only available through the use of graphics program and then imported as a file. The Calamus program has this built in.

Terry Ostheidt

ST Vice-President

(ed. note) - Terry is moving to Edmonton and will be resigning so we are looking for another person to take over the Sig meeting place and duties that go along with it. If you are interested call Bill Sutherland or any other Vantari executive.

Disclaimer

The articles contained herein are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Vantari or its members. Vantari assumes no responsibility for the statements contained in this newsletter.

Message from your President

Hi! A few months ago I indicated that I was interested in serving on the executive of Vantari. Now that I have been elected president I hope I will be able to serve you, the members of Vantari, well. After my first meeting with the rest of the executive I feel less apprehensive than the night of my election. I am very happy to be able to work with such an enthusiastic group. We of the executive are always on the look-out for ideas to bring to the meeting. This goes for both the 8 Bit and the 16 Bit segments of our group. When you come across an idea phone us so we may be able to act on it.

I wish to thank those who have served on the Vantari executive before me. And a special thanks to our past president Don Hatch who is still with us but now in the role of a director for the next two years.

On my wanderings this past month I heard of an OLD C.P.M. computer and printer for sale at $275.00 with software (a word processor that uses both English and Russian in the same document). If anyone is interested check with me for the phone number.

See you at the meetings.

Bill Sutherland.

Have you changed your address?

Send it to the editor so you won't miss the Vantari Newsletter.

Editor - Don Hatch
7187 Willingdon Ave.
Burnaby, B.C.
V5J 3R4
or send E-mail on the BBS.

Using the ZOOMTEST program supplied with Codehead's G+PLUS program, 50 repetitions take only 10 seconds in monochrome and 15 seconds in medium resolution, twice as fast as normal!

But don't take our word for it. Try Quick ST 1.6 for yourself. Quick ST is shareware, and is NOT public domain. It is available for a $15 shareware registration, far less than the cost of a hardware upgrade, or even the TOS 1.4 upgrade. Because we believe strongly in the shareware concept, which allows users to freely distribute and copy software so that it may be tried out on the user's own system, we have made available a demo version of Quick ST 1.6. It can be found in the Atari ST libraries of Compuserve, GEnie, Delphi, BIX, and is currently also available on Usenet in comp.sys.atari.st.

If after trying the Quick ST 1.6 demo, you feel that it is of no benefit to you, simply delete the files and forget about it. If you do appreciate the benefits of using Quick ST 1.6, simply send in your shareware registration fee (made payable to Darek Mihocka) and an updated disk contaning the full version of Quick ST 1.6 will me mailed to you. Quick ST 1.6 is not copy protected and installs on any standard boot disk. Because we believe in and support user groups, we are offering Quick ST to all full time members of Atari ST user groups for only $12. We ask that at least 5 people from the same user group register, and you must provide proof of membership (i.e. photocopy of membership card, official member

list, etc). There is no time limit on this, so please take the time to demo Quick ST at your user group so that every member can try it.

If you are already a registered user of the Quick Utilities or Quick ST (version 1.5 or earlier), simply mail your disk back along with $3, and the updated Quick ST 1.6 disk will me mailed to you. Do not bother to download the demo.

Our mailing address for shareware registrations, questions, comments, demos and updates is:

PO Box 2624, Station B
Kitchener, Ontario
N2H 6N2
Phone (in Canada): (519)-747-9452.

If you prefer to contact us by email, we can be reached at the following:

Compuserve: 73657,2714
BIX, Delphi, GEnie: DAREKM
UNIX: uunet!electro!ignac

If you are unable to obtain the Quick ST 1.6 demo by modem, simply mail us a blank disk and $3 (or no disk and $5) and we'll send you the demo disk.

This shareware offer is valid until the next Quick ST update.

The Vantari BBS

24Hrs. 3/12/2400 Baud

604-731-3397

Cactys Mountain BBS

D-Dial #74

255-1149

300 baud

7 Line Chat Simulator

$10. per month special for November, mail this ad and get $1. off.

Mail cheque to Sam Oben,
#114 - 603 East Broadway,
Vancouver B.C., V5T 1X7

8-BIT INFORMATION

by R. Lussier

The new CompuCenter at Eaton's Centre at Metrotown were telling me that they will be supporting the Atari 8-Bit. On their order list is a good selection of 8-Bit software at a very decent price, and also the magazine ANALOG which will be integrated in the ST LOG starting with the November, 1989 issue. The reason stated for this move is not enough 8-Bit material and few advertisers. A few more locations to obtain some software are A & B Sound stores around the lower mainland, the Wizard Computers store on Fraser St. in Vancouver and Sprite Computers in Surrey.

Those stores usually carry the 8-Bit magazines as well as the Granville Book Store in Vancouver and a store called Unihall Computer Books on Seymour Street across from the BAY, at gound level of the parkade.

For those living out Surrey way there is an 8-Bit User Group in Surrey called G.A.U.G.E. and if you want more information, call, Len Thomas at 596-2847 (home). They have a couple meetings a month and have a public domain library covering most subjects you may want.#

For Fractal Junkies Only:

By Douglas Skrecky

For those who are tired of waiting hours for a Mandelbrot program to finish drawing a picture there is now a new wau to indulge that fractal habit withourt also straining one's patience. In the August 1989 issue of Antic magazine lurks a new fractal program called Superhop! which is capable of delivering instant gratification! Written in Actionion!, Superhop! grows fractals at a speed that is hard to believe. The guy who wrote it must have been a genius.

Due to lack of space Antic had to delete part of the "fun" documentation which they were supplied with. Here are (and the first time) the "supressed" docs:

The Starware supercomputer crashed with a resounding thud. General Nukem immediately realized that this meant a career setback and he promptly fainted. The Starwars defence system was down and the REDS (Martians) were preparing to attack!

Professor Brainex assumed command and ordered the backup system placed online. Nothing can match the fractal dispersion capabilities of the enemy missles moaned the colonel. Put the Atari 8-bit online now! Brainex snapped. Ready for Defense sequence Sir! reported the colonel. The "D" key protocol was initiated. Now we can only hope the Atari is fast enough to target and destroy all incoming missiles Brainex murmurred. In mission control the monitor screen filled with fractal patterns as the defence system went into operation. Each dot represented a lazer hit.... #

The Curious Future of Atari 8-Bit Computers

By Douglas Skrecky

An Atari 8-Bit computer plus disk drive costs about the same as a new Atari ST with a single sided drive. So much for the Atari 8-Bit. We wouldn't give 2 bits for the future of the 8-Bits or would we?

A few years back Atari was selling more videogame machines than anyone else. This machine, called the 2600 wasn't the best unit around. All of the major competitors offered machines with superior graphics and sound. Why did the 2600 beat Intellivision and the Coleco to the punch? It was cheap - very cheap. The 2600 was the result of a sort of pre Tramiel 'Power without the Price' strategy. What does the past success of the 2600 have to do with the future of the 8-Bits?

Granted, a disk drive is going to cost about the same whether it is for an ST or an 8-Bit computer. Granted, that as a result the 8-Bits are finished as a viable computer system. Atari must have realized this when it repackaged the system as the XE game machine. If the machine were successful it would encourage programers to port versions of all the new games onto the 8-Bit and thus insure a continued support for present 8-Bit computer owners.

The only trouble is that the XE game machine is a bust. The reasons for this are not hard to find. Videogames machines are as popular as ever. Nintendo is making a fortune selling its videogame unit. What makes the Nintendo fly while the XEG flops? Quite simply it is the better unit of the two and it sells for about the same price. Atari made the mistake of competing head to head with Nintendo using an inferior machine. An 8-Bit game machine could easily duplicate the success of the 2600 provided the 2600 strategy is used. Forget the laser gun. Toss out the keyboard. Remove the built-in game cartridges. Even the 64k of ram is not needed to run the vast majority of cartridges. Cram the 8-Bit down into a modern version of the 2600 and you could sell it with a modest joystick for $40- the price of a single Nintendo cartridge. Then sit back and make the profit off of sales of $15 cartridges. It'll sell like hotcakes. #

EARTHQUAKE UPDATE

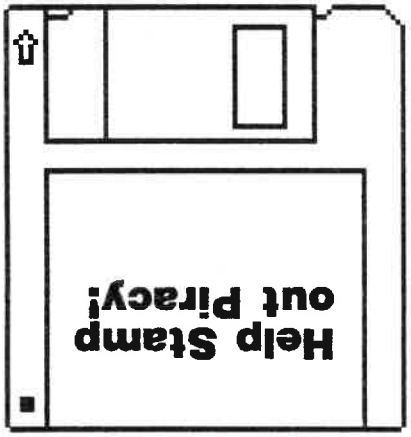
As all of you know by now, San Francisco and Oakland California were hit hard by an earthquake on Tuesday, October 17th. Antic Publishing is located in San Francisco. I am pleased to report that Antic is back in business, as of Friday, October 20th. The offices were without power for two days, but no major damage was inflicted to the offices by the quake. Unfortunately, some of Antic's employees lived in the Marina area of San Francisco. Your prayers and charitable contributions to the Red Cross and other relief efforts will help our friends at Antic get back on their feet once again soon.

Long faithful Atarians may remember Creative Computing, one of the earliest supporters of the Atari 400/800 computers with regular columns and software. John Anderson, once an associate editor for the now defunct Creative Computing, was killed during the earth quake on the highway 880 collapse. (ed. note - reported elswhere as killed by part of a collapsing building). He is best known to Atarians for his innovative "Outpost:Atari" column. John held a senior position on the editorial staff of MacUser at the time of his death. John leaves his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Anderson of Cresskill, NJ, and his wife, Lauren Hallquist, and two

continued over page..

children, Peter, 4, and Kate, 1, of Boulder Creek, CA. Friends and fans who wish to send condolences to his family may do so c/o Atari Explorer, 7 Hilltop Rd., Mendham, NJ 07945.

(Excerpted from CompuServe, reported by Betsy Staples.) downloaded from ST*ZMAGAZINE ISSUE #: 44 October 27, 1989.



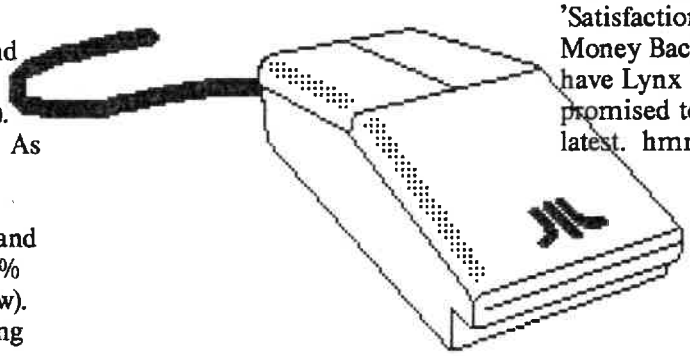
*from ST*ZMAGAZINE*
ISSUE #: 44
October 27,1989
Editor: Ron Kovacs

FAREWELL TO FRIENDS?

Many people are concerned about Antic magazine, and for good reason. It has gone from a healthy 88 page monthly magazine to an anemic 43 page bimonthly newsprint publication in just the last year. Antic truly reflects the 8bit market, since they depend primarily on subscriptions and advertising dollars for their profit. Many subscribers were displeased that they were "forced" into a disk subscription. However, the disk subscription is more profitable (and the price to you for the disk/ magazine combo is lower besides). Advertising continues to dwindle. As a result of the earth quake it may well drop off to virtually nothing (B&C, American Techna-Vision, and San Jose computer account for 80% or more of Antic's advertising now). But I have been assured that so long as Antic turns a profit, it will remain in print; even if it is a shadow of its once robust self. Buy it off the newsstand, or take a chance and subscribe. If you don't, you will miss this dear old friend when it's gone.

Buy the December 1989 issue of Analog. It will be a collector's item! Why? Because, sadly, it will be the LAST issue. As of November, 1989, Analog absorbed ST-Log. Since ST-Log is no longer an independent publication, it seems that you can kiss this baby goodbye too. I just got the fatal news, and don't know all the details. However, it seems that LFP (that's Larry Flynt Publications) has decided that Analog is not profitable (or not profitable enough?) and will discontinue it after December 1989. This deeply saddens me, since I have been closely tied with Analog for nearly six years (and well over 60 publications of my work).

I'm very close to selling all the Atari equipment I own, I'm so upset. WRITE! Talk me out of it. Actually, this might be the best time to bid my Atari computers a fond farewell. My pursuit of a Master's degree is very



ST REPORT ONLINE MAGAZINE
October 27,1989 No.111
ST REPORT CONFIDENTIAL
Sayin' it like it is...
- Sunnyvale, CA-

SIG HARTMANN RETIREMENT A GALA EVENT

Amid all the festivities stood a rather nifty card that showed the admiration the folks at Atari have for Sig.. A card that is unique and absolutely original. !ZORRO HARTMANN..! Without a doubt, the people at Atari will miss Sig.. As will the userbase in general. We hope he, at least, stays on with Atari in an advisory capacity. Or, as Atari's Goodwill Ambassador. ....After all, he is regarded as "Mr. Atari" by most all the users.... ps; Mel did a great job on the card.

Chicago, IL-

SEARS CATALOG PRESENTS LYNX FOR SALE!

After verifying with the Sears Catalog people, customers can call and order the Lynx from Sears. The phone number is 1 - 800 - 366 - 3000 and the item # is 49-TD-75425 for $159.00. Sears selling the Lynx should be a great deal for Atari and their customers as Sears fully services what they sell and will not allow companies who's products they sell avoid servicing them. Additionally, Sears has their 'Satisfaction Guaranteed Or Your Money Back' policy. Sears does not have Lynx at this time, but Atari has promised to deliver by 11/18 at the latest. hmmmmm...

THE ST CORNER

by R. Lussier

Following is another listing of a few of the programs available from your clubs ST library. These are on sale for $4.00 each and well worth the price. Some of the Public Domain programs are of a better quality than some of the commercial and expensive programs I have seen.

The first program on the block this month is called "STICKER ICONS" (BRE #722). This disk is full of extra Icons for the people who have the label making program called STICKER or STICKER III. This is a good and useful disk. STICKER III is now available with this disk of Icons already on it. Even a better deal.

The "ASSISTANT CHEF" is a unique application program. It is a recipe database complete with a collection of recipes that can be sorted by several categories. Each recipe is complete with directions, over 40 in all. You can also add your own favorite recipes. Print out a copy of your recipe you want to use in the kitchen without worrying about spilling stuff on it, just print out a new copy. This is a very user friendly program which requires no computer knowledge but is very complete with tons of features. Anyone interested in cooking and computing should have this in their library. Maybe your wife doesn't like computers, this could possibly convert her.

The next program is called "PRIME BETA DEMO" (CN #258). If you have an interest in Numerology, Astrology or Horoscopes this program could be for you. This being a DEMO program it has a few options cancelled out, such as Saving your file. The program makes it possible to tell your characteristics and fortunes according to the numbers in your life. This program requires 1 MEG and a single sided drive. Very interesting.

The next one is a disk (PATNOR #130) of utilities which include Deluxe Slideshow, Sorter V1.0, and a unique formatter program called the Ultimate Formatter. With this program you can look at girls while you are formatting those disks. Another disk from PATNOR (#202) is one which includes many Printmaster Icons, 69 of which are highly X-Rated (if you are interested!).

The next disk program is (BRE #677) that has programs called "HANG OPUS" (Hang-Man type) which is self explanatory. The next program is "CLOWNS AND BALLOONS" which was converted from our old friend the 8-Bit computer and a very good program of the ever popular "BACKGAMMON".

Another program (CN #340) is called "DISK/MAIL LABEL PROGRAMS". This disk is full of label makers for business, disk directories, light mail, quick labels and many more. A very useful program.

Another one is called "DIGINUDE SOUND/GRAPHICS". This is one for gentlemen of good taste. The program has nice digitised pictures and each of the ladies has something to say to you in digitised sound.

This is very tastefully done, no overt pornography type disk so don't get excited. A very good disk (ST ARCHIVE #271).

The last program in this months reviews is called "STAR TREK DIGISOUND" (ST ARCHIVE #129). This program has no graphics but has 35 files of beautifully done digitised sound of some the the favorite sayings of the the Star Trek team along with some other sounds such as the space torpedoes firing and warping space. This is the Captain Kirk series not the Captain Picard series. Very well done and enjoyable especially for anybody interested in digitised sounds.

Well that's it for this month. I hope some of these programs and information are to your liking and will prove useful to some. Please don't forget to support your user group libraries. This helps your club and helps to keep the libraries by supplying money for new disks, etc. Till next time .... #

ICD - A SUCCESS STORY

STR Spotlight

==========

Super Sport Speed
& High Quality
HARD DRIVE PERFORMANCE

==========

by R.F Mariano

As the sun sends it's glorious rays bursting above the horizon, heralding it's arrival or, as it gloriously sets in the west bidding us a fond farewell, there is someone booting a computer and using the new ICD Hard Disk Utilities. Looks like the sun will never set on the pride of ICD.

It becomes almost automatic with most of us and we don't actually pay that much attention to what is happening when we boot up. We decided to stop, reboot and actually watch what was going on. We found that going from the 3.41 software to the new 4.2.0 (sheesh 4.2 sounds and looks better), was like... Slipping behind the wheel of a sleek, snazzy new sports car, as its fired up. After hitting the power switch on the mega, there were two quick blinks on each of the four hard disks in the system then, in an instant, the booter setup appeared and the boot continued, blip, blip, and the desktop was in front of me.. ready to go....

The new ICD booter (4.2) is the epitome of software technology for hard disk efficiency at this time. In fact, for those who do not have an accelerator, this is as good as it gets

continued over page

when coupled with Soft Trek's Turbo ST. Of course, running the same system WITH Fast Technology's T-16 borders on supersonic speeds.

ICD has, in the past year, led the way in software development for hard disk management. In fact, nothing even comes close. ICD software has the handle on easy user interfacing, this means that the software may be practically used straight 'out of the box' and the docs used only as a reference. The formatting software is, by far, the best once again it is easy to understand and implement. Many times the message strings on the various nets try to compare other hardisk software to ICD's. The bottom line is simple ICD is light years ahead of all other ST hard disk software and by their current performance, exhibit a desire to remain on the cutting edge of new hardware and software technology.

In brief, here are a few things you SHOULD know about this software:

This current release includes full support for Omti 3520/3527(a) SCSI controllers and drives connected to them, most embedded SCSI drives, and support for Adaptec 4000(a)/4070 SCSI controllers (only high level defect mapping is supported with Adaptecs). SASI controllers are no longer supported. Use our older version software for use with SASI or else purchase a new Omti controller. It will be much faster than SASI.

Many new features were incorporated into this release of our software. The version 4.x.x booter includes read/write caching, DOS buffers, and an additional folder fix memory pool, all of which are adjustable with the new HDUTIL! Write verify and status messages have also become optional. If you have trouble booting with our new ICDBOOT.PRG, press the ‹ESC› key during the initial boot process. This will disable the cache, buffers, verify, etc. and install a minimal configuration booter. You can then use HDUTIL to configure the booter to work with your setup.

The read/write cache is now an integral part of our booter and much faster than any other available cache program! The variable DOS buffers will also speed up your floppy access times.

The Hard drive handler (ICDBOOT.PRG) optionally verifies after write. You will notice about a 20% decrease in speed with verify enabled. If a write failure does occur, a little '‹Write Fail #xxxx›' will appear in the lower right hand corner of your screen, if you do not get an Alert box, then it was able to recover and everything is secure. This usually indicates a hardware failure (bad cable, connection, etc.).

Most people are NOT aware that NO OTHER HANDLER does write verify! This really is not too startling since hard drives are so reliable, BUT, that data is going through an 18" cable (Supra and Atari drives) at a very fast rate (from 300 to over 1000 K bytes per second) with no checksums whatsoever. Why do you think they don't use longer cables? It certainly would be more convenient! We ship 36" cables with our ST drives, but that extra length is acceptable due to the ICD ST Host Adapter's design... it is highly resistent to cable noise. With the write verify in the software, this practically guarantees an error-free system (assuming, of course, computer, drive, controller, etc. are in good operating order).

ICD, Inc.
1220 Rock Street
Rockford, IL 61101
Voice: 815-968-2228
BBS: 815-968-2229
FAX: 815-968-6888

The ICD BBS has the latest versions of the ICD ST Host Adapter software, as well as handy utilities, etc., all yours for the downloading. Our BBS goes to 9600 baud (US Robotics), and is usually up 24 hours a day. Support and updated files are also available on GEnie (ICDINC)

Gadgets by Small notes!
GCR - On the Way!

---

courtesy Compuserve
#: 12096 S14/Gadgets By Small
22-Oct-89 04:19:13
Sb: #GCR- AN ACID TEST!
Fm: Kris Cruz 76060,1702
To: Dave and Sandy Small 76004,2136

I have had my GCR since the 19th now and feel qualified to give you a report. First, let me give you some background on myself. I attend / work for Eastern Washington University. I work as a computer consultant. We have three computer labs-VAX,IBM and MAC. I work in the MAC lab (where else?). It consists of one Mac Plus as a server,using a 40 Meg HD and 530 Meg CD ROM. There are 10 more Mac Plus's on the Appleshare network as well as two imagewriters and a laserwriter plus. They are available for student use.

The GCR comes in a molded plastic case, whose colors and dimensions have been revealed elsewhere in this section. It does beat the paper bag. The manual is an 8.5 X 11' affair shrinkwrapped together. It contains a potpourri of items from the original Spectre manual (namely the interludes) as well as GCR specific items. I did enjoy the interludes and tales of Small, but some more new ones would have been nice. I also would not have complained if they did include a vinyl binder for the manual, of course with the Gadgets Logo emblazoned on it. Perhaps Dave can make some up and sell them, I know I would buy one. The information, is as always, complete and this time it even included Appendices and an index- really professional. As soon as I got the manual, I sat down to read it, not your typical Christmas morning

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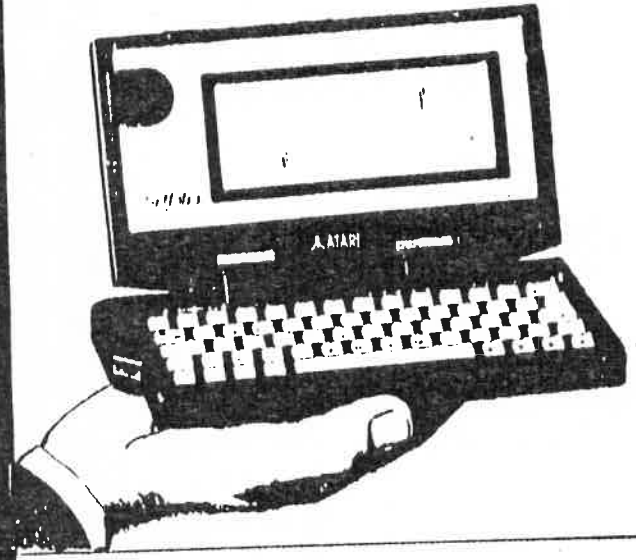

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really professional. As soon as I got the manual, I sat down to read it, not your typical Christmas morning reaction, I know. But I figured that if I had wrecked it, the waiting to get another would have driven me to my death. Anyway, I plugged in the ROMS and brought it up. I already had my hard drive set up for Spectre in HFS, so there was no need for me to change anything. It booted up just fine, but then the 1.9f software also worked fine. I put in a GCR encoded Mac disk I just happened to have, and it work! I should not be surprised, after all, Dave has always delivered what he promised (sometimes after he promises, but Murphy is after all his grandfather). I had been waiting frantically for the GCR, so I could use my $600 Pagemaker 3.0 without having to transmit everything via null modem cables. I am sure I made an impression on both Dave and Sandy with my letter I wrote them threatening/begging for my GCR.

I have used Dave Small products since he was into the 8 bit XE stuff and even remember when he wrote for Creative Computing. I bought Magic Sac when it came out, then Spectre and now GCR. Needless to say, I would expect and only accept quality work from David Small when it comes to my money. I had previously tried a friends Happy cartridge. Needless to say I was far from Happy. I needed a RELIABLE way to read GCR encoded mac disks on my ST. Why? Well, I actually USE the Spectre for real tasks. I depend on it. I program in Turbo PASCAL and DTP in Pagemaker. It is nice to show the thing off to MAC owners (my cousin for instance), but I am somewhat practical in my approach. I wanted to do REAL mac stuff. That meant reading the disks.

Thus, I got my GCR and tried a few disks. This is all well and fine, but does it meet my criteria for my use? Well, I had to know BEFORE I trusted it with my valuable data. So I brought up the GCR and formatted ten disks from the MAC desktop. This works exactly as it does on the MAC. I then transferred some files on to each disk to see if they would read correctly at work. I tried each of the ten disks on each of the ten user stations on the MAC network. Each has an external drive, which was also used. So, there were 200 disk insertions/ejections done to see if the MACs were reading the GCR formatted disks. Not a single one of them had trouble reading the disks. Consider also that these computers are used for at least 8 hours each day and that the GCR format must be pretty tolerant (ie, it writes em like a *REAL* MAC!).

Stage two involved the MAC to ST Acid Test. I decided to fill the ten disks up with as much of the 530 MEG CD ROM Educorp Collection as I could get. When I got home, I tried each disk to see if any would give me trouble. Every disk worked just fine. Since that test, I have been using the GCR daily. I have yet to get a problem reading/writing a MAC disk. Please note that if GCR had not worked with at least a 95% success rate, I would have sent it back. I would like to take the time now, to tell everyone who was wondering if the GCR does work and work RELIABLY. You can bet your data on it. What else do you need to know? Dave Small has set a standard of doing the impossible (he has an agreement, he does the impossible, GOD does the miracles!) and this time he has outdone himself.

GCR was worth the wait, although I did go crazy while waiting. It definitely is worth the bucks. Consider not only are you getting a Mac emulator, but a way to transfer MAC data to IBM, IBM to Mac. If you don't think that is a value, call up an APPLE dealer sometime, tell him you have a MAC plus and want to read IBM disks on it. Then tell me GCR costs too much. There are other cheap imitators out there none of them read MAC disks in a reliable manner. Get, support, get service, ..get smart and get a GCR! Thanks Dave!

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